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DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS.

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AS NOTED IN THE PREFACE TO THE BIBLIOGRAPHY WHICH MAKES UP THE BULK OF THIS BULLETIN, NEGROES RECEIVE THE GREATEST SHARE OF ATTENTION IN THE EXTENSIVE LITERATURE ON DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS. THE LITERATURE IS PRIMARILY DESCRIPTIVE AND POLEMICAL AND LACKS INTENSIVE ANALYSIS AND ATTENTION TO SPECIFIC SUBGROUPS. DISADVANTAGED GROUPS ARE SEEN AS AN UNDIFFERENTIATED MASS, A VIEWPOINT WHICH NEGLECTS THE VARIETY, CONDITIONS, PROBLEMS, AND POTENTIAL ASSETS OF LOW-STATUS PEOPLE. THE "SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED" ARE PEOPLE HANDICAPPED BY LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AS WELL AS, IN SOME GROUPS, BY ETHNIC AND CULTURAL CASTE STATUS. COMING FROM BACKGROUNDS WHICH ARE CULTURALLY DIFFERENT, DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN LACK THE EXPERIENCES NECESSARY FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT. CONCENTRATION OF SUCH GROUPS IN THE INNER-CITY HAS CREATED PARTICULAR PRESSURES ON URBAN SCHOOLS TO DEVELOP BETTER WAYS TO EDUCATE THEM. AS WELL AS CONSIDERING THE INFLUENCE OF A CHILD'S ENVIRONMENT ON HIS LEARNING, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS MUST "OPTIMIZE AND MAXIMIZE" ACHIEVEMENT IN BASIC SKILLS. THE BIBLIOGRAPHY IS IN THREE SECTIONS--(1) BOOK-LENGTH TREATMENTS OF THE PROBLEM OF THE DISADVANTAGED, (2) DEMOGRAPHIC AND STATUS STUDIES, AND (3) LITERATURE ON CULTURAL AND SOCIAL PATTERNS. ALSO INCLUDED IN THIS BULLETIN ARE SHORT BOOK REVIEWS BY DOXEY WILKERSON OF KENNETH CLARK'S "DARK GHETTO" AND BY CLARENCE SENIOR OF "IMPERATIVES FOR CHANGE," EDITED BY ADELAIDE JABLONSKY.

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Disadvantaged Populations

Preface to a Bibliography

As one of the specialized clearinghouses in a national information system, the Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC-IRCD, focuses on literature and resources related to socially, culturally, and economically disadvantaged urban children and youth. In functioning as an information and resources center, it compiles and makes available a number of materials relevant to these populations. Accordingly, this issue of the *IRCD BULLETIN* consists primarily of a bibliography on socially disadvantaged populations.

The contents of this bibliography suggest that an understanding of socially disadvantaged children and youth would be incomplete without a consideration of corresponding adult populations and the environments in which they live. It is planned, therefore, that this bibliography serve as the introduction and general background to future bibliographies which will focus more sharply on the education of disadvantaged children and youth and will cover the following areas: 1, educational programs, theory, and practice; 2, curriculum development; 3, individual development; 4, academic function and achievement; 5, linguistics and language development; and, 6, ethnic segregation, desegregation, and integration in education.

The development of an extensive literature on disadvantaged populations in the United States has been greatly influenced by historic and episodic concern with the civil rights of the Negro people — so much so that although the Negro people do not constitute the largest number of poor people in this country, the representation of this group in this literature suggests that they account for a larger proportion of the poor than is consistent with fact. This, however, may not be inappropriate since proportionately more Negroes are poor than whites and since the disadvantages born of low ethnic status have often proved to be more debilitating than those associated with low economic status. A review of this literature clearly indicates that poor whites, migrant workers, poor families of Spanish-speaking backgrounds, American Indians, etc., as special groups have received somewhat less attention than have Negroes. Indeed, the bibliography which follows is noticeably lacking in extensive reference to many of these special groups. Although they are somewhat less numerous in urban areas, these groups should and must be considered in any serious study of socially disadvantaged populations.

This literature is heavily descriptive and frequently polemical. As a collected body of works, it suffers from an absence of intensive analyses of specific subpopulations and the specific circumstances which influence their lives. The tendency to generalize, to embrace too generous assumptions, and to advance stereotypic conclusions are all too frequently not avoided. Perhaps these weaknesses in the literature are due in part to the fact that the problems of underdevelopment and social handicap in the disadvantaged have not been appropriately conceptualized. The majority of investigators who have worked in this field have viewed disadvantaged populations as a great homogeneous mass. Insufficient attention has been given to the wide variety of persons, conditions, problems, and potential assets which are represented by these groups.

The term *socially disadvantaged* refers to populations in our society which differ from each other in a number of ways but have in common such characteristics as low economic status; low social status; low educational achievement; tenuous, poorly paid, or no employment; minimal participation in community organizations; and limited ready potential for upward mobility. Variously referred to as the *culturally deprived*, the *socioeconomically deprived*, the *socially and culturally disadvantaged*, the *chronically poor*, the *poverty stricken*, the *culturally alienated*, and so on, these are people who are handicapped by depressed social and economic status and who, in too many instances, are further handicapped by ethnic and cultural caste status.

Whether Negro, Puerto Rican, Mexican, American Indian, Southern rural or mountain white, these people are the bearers of cultural attitudes which are often different from those dominant in the broader society. As a consequence, their children come to school disadvantaged to the degree that their culture has failed to provide them with the experiences "normal" to the children the schools are accustomed to teaching. In addition, they and their parents are in varying degrees sufficiently alienated from the professed values and mores of the broader community to distort, if not preclude, productive involvement in school and community affairs. It is not surprising then that the children of these families show high rates of social maladjustment, behavioral disturbance, physical disability, academic retardation, and mental subnormality.

Such problems are difficult wherever they are found, but they have been exacerbated and drastically brought to public attention because of the increasing concentration of these populations in the center city and because of the increasing pressure on educators to insure the academic success of these children in the public school. The schools, nevertheless, have only begun to cope with the general problems identified, as bibliographic topics, at the beginning of this discussion as being particularly relevant to the education of disadvantaged children and youth. Not only has insufficient attention been given to areas such as individual develop-

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A Bibliography on Disadvantaged Populations

The bibliography that follows is presented in three sections. Section I includes books on the general area of disadvantaged populations; Section II includes demographic and status studies; and Section III is concerned with cultural and social patterns.

ERIC–IRCD is introducing a coding system to assist the reader in gaining access to documents cited in bibliographies. No special notation will be made for articles appearing in regularly published journals, which are readily available to most subscribers in university and other libraries. The relevant code letters which will be placed at the end of each of the remaining appropriate citations are as follows:

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Reviews

Dark Ghetto

At least two recent developments emphasize the currency of Dr. Clark's two-year-old Ghetto — first, the increasing evidence that many, if not most, existing programs of compensatory education do not point the way to overcoming the chronic failure of the ghetto school; and, second, the violent eruptions in the slums of many cities during the summer of 1967.

Dark Ghetto rejects as an alibi for educational neglect the prevailing thesis that the culturally deprived child is unable to learn well in school because of the handicaps imposed by socialization under conditions of poverty and discrimination. It calls for an end to "Defeatism in Ghetto Schools," insisting that competent teaching by professionals who truly accept their pupils will lead to normative academic performance.

The author problably underestimates the importance of the socially-induced handicaps with which most impoverished children enter school, but his thesis that they can learn if provided with appropriate school experiences is validated by considerable evidence. The pressing needs are for teachers with real confidence in the growth potential of such children, and for radically modified curriculum programs to overcome, rather than accommodate, whatever limitations there may be in their preschool development. Many compensatory education programs are deficient on both counts, which may help to explain the disappointing results of recent evaluations of their effectiveness.

Dark Ghetto also calls for radical transformation of the slums through struggles by their oppressed masses: *There is harnessable power to effect profound change in the generally repressed rage of the alienated.* But the author seems really to doubt the capacity of the people of the ghetto for effective struggle, apparently because they do not rally behind the leadership of *those Negroes who are worthy of confidence and respect.* Thus he addresses an appeal to the most wealthy and influential men of the community power structure to intervene.

The riots of last summer attest dramatically to the capacity of the ghetto masses for struggle. That they were chaotic and politically aimless is unfortunate, but perhaps we are witnessing the early stages of a continuing development. Perhaps the people of the slums will yet move with disciplined power — at the call of leaders whom they do embrace — in self-help struggles that can neither be ignored nor deflected, and in the course of which their own self-respect will be enhanced and the respect of the whole society compelled. This may be what is required to move the power structures of the nation into corrective action.

Doxey A. Wilkerson, Ph.D.

DARK GHETTO: DILEMMAS OF SOCIAL POWER, by Kenneth B. Clark, New York: Harper and Row, 1965. 240p.

DR. DOXEY A. WILKERSON is Associate Professor of Education at the Ferkauf Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences of Yeshiva University and is a member of the ERIC-IRCD University Advisory Board. An extended review of *Dark Ghetto* by Dr. Wilkerson appeared in the Teachers College Record, Vol. 67, No. 5, February 1966.

Imperatives For Change

Red lights are flashing on riot cars and red flames are roaring in slums across the country. Perhaps if this carefully organized conference had been held at Yeshiva University in midsummer, a greater sense of urgency would have been displayed by more of the participants. But the reader can find plenty of evidence in the Proceedings that both the organizers and many of those attending might well have foreseen some of the July headlines such as "Poor Schools Called a Cause of Riots" or "Schools Accused on Rise in Crime."

Many positive suggestions came from the nineteen workshops; there was near unanimity on some prescriptions for postponements in preservice and inservice training and on the need for much greater emphasis on community relations. One of the sharpest criticisms of the school system was made in this report:

> *Community involvement is so alien that we have little or no opportunity to develop skills in working with the community. As members of the establishment we are afraid, hidebound and smug. We are also aloof, arrogant, and totally unaware.*

A specific suggestion made many times and applicable to both classroom and neighborhood (as well, for that matter to international relations) is *Listen!* We educators often feel we have so much to say that we haven't the time or patience to listen to those on the "other side of the tracks." We are not alone; city, state, and federal offcials haven't been listening either. Many of the heads of civic, business, labor, religious, and other non-governmental organizations are similarly deaf to any sound less shrill than sirens.

Society as a whole has done an unacceptable job in areas of socially-structured disabilities. That this includes the *disadvantaged* teacher as well as what we patronizingly call the *culturally-deprived* pupil is clear on many pages of this significant publication.

The six-page summary is a gem of condensation and interpretation, and the introduction by the editor is also essential reading. The highlight, however, of the Proceedings for this reviewer is the hard-hitting talk by an outsider, Dr. Richard H. Popkin, Professor of Philosophy at the San Diego campus of the University of California. It puts our problems in historical and world perspective and gives the fundamental prescription, *we obviously need a social revolution.* The schools alone cannot bring it about, but all educators should be aware of the necessity for social reconstruction and the need for their involvement.

Clarence Senior, Ph.D.

IMPERATIVES FOR CHANGE, Proceedings of the New York State Education Department Conference on College and University Programs for Teachers of the Disadvantaged, compiled and edited by Adelaide Jablonsky, Albany: Bureau of Inservice Education, 1967. 122 p.

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Disadvantaged Populations

(Continued from page 1)

ment, language development, and curriculum development, but it is also possible that neglect of the general background factors which are identifiable in this literature may impede the schools' progress in meeting their primary responsibility in developing effective programs of education for children from these populations. As important as these problems in educational development are, it may be that the critical factors in the acceleration of development in these target populations relate to the kinds of provisions that are made for dealing with economic insufficiency, caste status, participation in the decision-making process in crucial areas influencing their lives, and in enhancing a sense of self-worth and relatedness to the broader communities in which these families are found.

While the schools must necessarily maintain their primary concern with the design and management of the teaching-learning process, one cannot leave a review of work referred to in this bibliography unaware of the extent to which educational adjustment and achievement may be influenced by background and situational factors over which the schools have little control. Nonetheless, in the pursuit of one of the schools' principal functions in a democracy, that of equalizing educational opportunity in preparation for participation in the mainstream of the society, these non-school factors cannot be ignored as having no relevance to what the schools do in those areas where they do maintain primary control. The design of educational programs which, despite differentials in the background experiences and competencies with which these youngsters arrive at school, nonetheless results in equality in the achievement of basic levels of competence and skill is increasingly recognized as the current challenge to our schools. With the achievement of this basic goal, the schools will still be expected to optimize and maximize achievement in relation to differential patterns of ability, interest, experience, and style found among individual children as well as among the subgroups served.

The cultural, demographic, incidence and status factors which have been treated in the several works cited below form a background against which educational problems must be assessed and in the light of which programs must be designed. We delude ourselves, however, if we maintain the position that the education and development of disadvantaged populations can be optimized without fundamental changes in these non-school factors.

E. W. G.

The IRCD BULLETIN is a bi-monthly publication of the ERIC Information Retrieval Center on the Disadvantaged. It is published five times a year and usually includes status or interpretive statements, book reviews, and a selected bibliography on some aspect of the center's special areas. Subject areas covered by IRCD include the effects of disadvantaged environments; the academic, intellectual, and social performance of disadvantaged children and youth; programs and practices which provide learning experiences designed to compensate for the special problems and build on the characteristics of the disadvantaged; and programs and practices related to economic and ethnic discrimination, segregation, desegregation, and integration in education.

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